



Ovarian Cancer 101

What You Need To Know



WHAT IS CANCER?

Cancer is an abnormal growth of cells which can damage and destroy normal tissue, thereby causing death of the person.

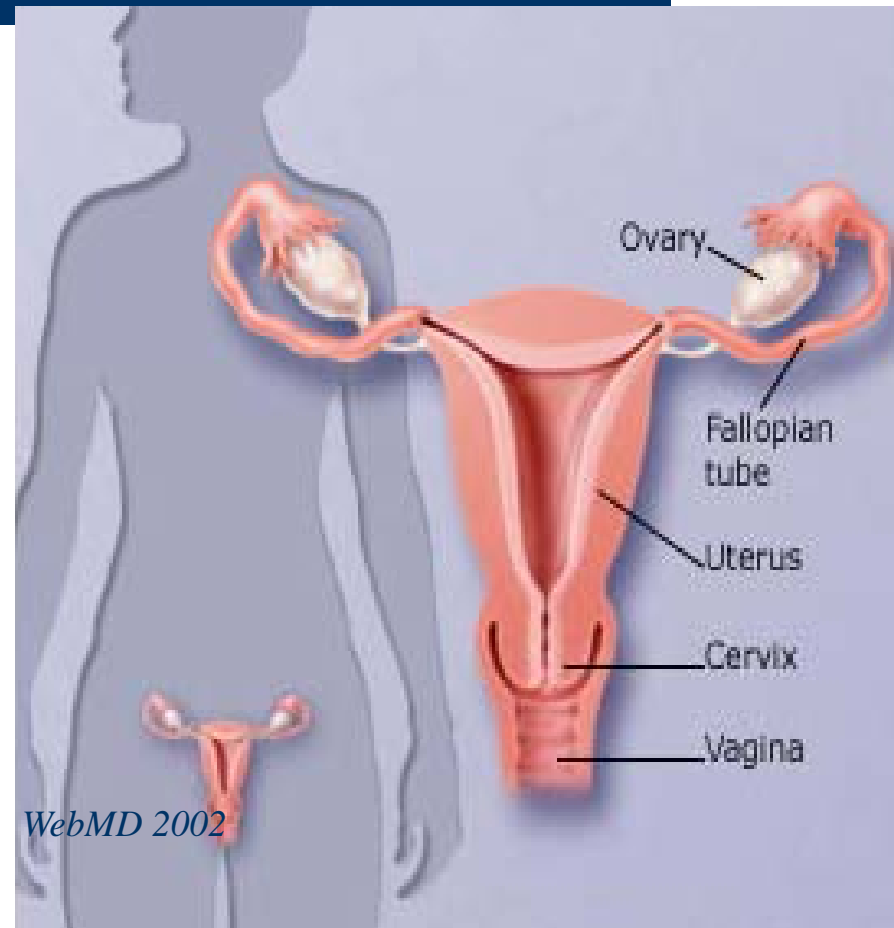


WHAT IS OVARIAN CANCER?

- When cancer starts in the ovaries, it is called ovarian cancer. The ovaries are a part of a woman's reproductive system. They are in the pelvis. Each ovary is about the size of an almond.

The female reproductive system

- Vagina
- Cervix
- Uterus
- Fallopian tubes
- Ovaries



Ovarian Cancer Facts

- Second most common gynecologic cancer in the US
- 24,000 new cases each year
- 70% of women are diagnosed present with advanced disease
- Most deadly of the gynecologic cancers
- Over 14,000 deaths each year

WHO GETS OVARIAN CANCER?

- Older women are more likely to get the disease than younger women.
- 90% of women who get ovarian cancer are older than 40, with the greatest number being age 55 and older.

Ovarian Cancer Risk Factors

- Risk increases with age, especially around the time of menopause
- Family history of ovarian cancer or breast cancer
- Personal history of breast cancer
- Infertility/not bearing children
- Endometriosis

Ovarian Cancer Symptoms

- There are symptoms—NOT a silent disease
- Symptoms more likely to occur in women with ovarian cancer than in the general population:
 - Bloating
 - Increased abdominal pain
 - Difficulty eating or feeling full quickly
 - Urinary symptoms (urgency or frequency)
- Ovarian cancer symptoms are persistent and represent a change from normal
- Ovarian cancer symptoms are typically present almost daily for more than 2-3 weeks

Ovarian Cancer Symptoms

- Other symptoms reported by women with ovarian cancer, but found with equal frequency in women without ovarian cancer:
 - Fatigue
 - Indigestion
 - Back pain
 - Pain with intercourse
 - Constipation
 - Menstrual irregularities

Ovarian Cancer Diagnosis

- Vaginal - Rectal exam
- Transvaginal or pelvic ultrasound
- If an irregularity is found
 - CA 125 blood test
 - CT Scan or MRI
 - Biopsy



Remember, a Pap test does not
detect ovarian cancer!

TREATMENT FOR CANCER OF THE OVARIES:

- SURGERY
- RADIATION
- CHEMOTHERAPY

SURGERY

- Laparotomy: long cut in the wall of the abdomen
- Removes:
 - both ovaries and fallopian tubes
 - The uterus
 - The omentum
 - Nearby lymph nodes
 - Samples of tissue from the pelvis and abdomen

RADIATION THERAPY

- Uses high-energy rays to kill cancer cells
- May be used to relieve pain and other problems

SIDE EFFECTS OF RADIATION

- Nausea/vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Bloody Stools
- Skin may become red, dry, and tender

CHEMOTHERAPY

- **Drugs given by vein and directly into the abdomen or by mouth.**

CHEMOTHERAPY SIDE EFFECTS:

- **Nausea and/or vomiting**
- **Loss of appetite and weight**
- **Temporary loss of hair**
- **Sores in mouth or vagina**
- **Diarrhea**
- **Increased chance of infection**
- **Tiredness**

How Can I Prevent Ovarian Cancer?

There is no known way to prevent ovarian cancer, but the following may lower your risk:

- Having used birth control pills for more than five years.
- Having had a tubal ligation (getting your tubes tied), both ovaries removed, or hysterectomy.
- Having given birth

Ovarian Cancer--Take Action

- Find out if you are at risk for ovarian cancer.
 - Log on to www.wcn.org and take a risk assessment
- Learn the symptoms
- If ovarian cancer is suspected or diagnosed
 - Insist on being referred to a gynecologic oncologist before you have surgery.